DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 269 787 CS 209 752

AUTHOR Dvorak, Jack
TITLE Comparisons of College Grades, ACT Scores and High School Grades between Those with and Those without High School Newspaper or Yearbook Experience.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (69th, Norman, OK, August 3-6, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *College Freshmen; Comparative Analysis; *Educational Experience; Extracurricular Activities; *Grades (Scholastic); Higher Education; High Schools; High School Students; Journalism; Journalism Education; School Newspapers; *School Publications; *Scores; Student Publications; Yearbooks
IDENTIFIERS *ACT Assessment

ABSTRACT

To determine if any significant differences existed between secondary school students who had been on the staff of a school newspaper or yearbook and those students who had no publication experience, a study examined 19,249 college students who had completed their college freshman year in 1984 and who had taken the ACT Assessment as high school students during the 1982-1983 testing period. The following data were also obtained: Interest Inventory and Student Profile Section scores; final grades in the last high school courses in English, social studies, mathematics, and science; college freshman cumulative grade point averages; and first college English course grades. Findings showed that in 10 of 12 statistical comparisons, those students who had completed at least one year of college and who had been on the staff of a high school newspaper or yearbook earned significantly higher scores than their counterparts who were not involved in publications. The 10 significantly higher comparisons were found in cumulative college freshman grade point average; first collegiate English course; ACT Composite score; ACT English score; ACT Social Studies score; and mean score and final score of four high school courses in English, social studies, mathematics, and natural science. In only one of 12 comparisons--the ACT Mathematics score--did the group with high school publications experience show a significant negative difference. (Author/HOD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED269787

COMPARISONS OF COLLEGE GRADES, ACT SCORES AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADES BETWEEN THOSE WITH AND THOSE WITHOUT HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER OR YEARBOOK EXPERIENCE

by

Jack Dvorak

School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The University of Iowa

A research paper submitted for presentation at the
Annual Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism
and Mass Communication, Secondary Education Division
The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
August 1986

CS209752

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jack Dvorak

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

COMPARISONS OF COLLEGE GRADES, ACT SCORES AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADES
BETWEEN THOSE WITH AND THOSE WITHOUT
HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER OR YEARBOOK EXPERIENCE

by Jack Dvorak
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The University of Iowa

This study examines 19,249 college students who had completed their freshman year in 1984 and who had taken the ACT Assessment as high school students during the 1982-1983 testing period.

Findings indicate that in 10 of 12 statistical comparisons, those students who had completed at least one year of college and who had been on the staff of a high school newspaper or yearbook earned significantly higher scores than their non-publications counterparts. Those 10 significantly higher comparisons are found in cumulative freshman college grade point average; first collegiate English course; ACT Composite score; ACT English score; ACT Social Studies score; mean score of final four high school courses in English, social studies, mathematics and natural science; final high school English grade; final high school social studies grade; final high school mathematics grade; and final high school natural science grade.

In only one of 12 comparisons--the ACT Mathematics score--did the group with high school publications experience show a negative significant difference. In the ACT Natural Science Assessment, no significant differences were observed.

While conclusions involving causal relationships have been avoided, it is apparent from the study that high school newspapers and yearbooks provide a type of positive outlet for talented students that might not otherwise be provided within a school's curricular and co-curricular offerings.

Other demographic characteristics comparing the publications students with the non-publications students are provided. In general, publications students are more active in student organizations, clubs, and leadership positions than are their non-publications counterparts. Also, a higher percentage of minority students are involved in publications than the percentage of minority students who are not involved in school publications. Further, more than two-thirds of the students who have been involved with high school publications planned on serving on the staff of a college newspaper or yearbook.

COMPARISONS OF COLLEGE GRADES, ACT SCORES AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADES BETWEEN THOSE WITH AND THOSE WITHOUT HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER OR YEARBOOK EXPERIENCE

One of the laments of the National Commission on Excellence in Education in its now well-known treatise A Nation at Risk was that secondary school curricula have become watered down to the extent that they are "homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose."[1]

Further, according to the Commission, too many electives have been mistaken for main courses, and too many students have gravitated toward a general program of study instead of a college preparatory program. Indeed, secondary school students taking a general program of study instead of a college preparatory program increased from 12 percent in 1964 to 42 percent in 1979.[2]

In their 1983 report, Commissioners found that contemporary high school students were not as able to perform higher order intellectual skills as those students from former eras. For example, in the language arts area, the Commission claimed that only 20 percent of the students could write a persuasive essay, while 40 percent could not draw inferences from the written material of others.[3] Further, the Commission cited College Board scores showing a virtual unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980, with average verbal scores falling more than 50 points on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.[4]

Within this context, a study was done to see if any significant differences existed between those secondary school students who had been on the staff of a school newspaper or yearbook and those students who had no publications experience.

Several assumptions precluded the study:

*Publications experience, often accompanied by a credit course in journalism, fulfills several elements considered crucial in the language arts program--in many cases more completely, more richly and more understandably for students than many traditional English composition courses and other English writing courses.

*Publications experience offers relevance, built-in objectives, a transactional experience, application of various liberal arts theories learned in other disciplines, and opportunities for high level decision-making. It brings to life the need for the study of English grammar, usage, spelling, style, and syntax.

*Publications experience, rather than a co-curricular sometimes regarded as a costly frill by administrators, should be viewed as one of the truly important school activities in the preparation of students for college. Within the same framework, publications experience should be considered as an integral and important component of the language arts programs of schools--contrary to connotations by some national and state excellence in education commissions that such activity is not part of the "back to basics" movement often advocated in their reports.[5]

Some research questions evolve from the assumptions:

*Are there significant first-year college cumulative grade point average differences between those who had high school newspaper or yearbook staff experiences and those who had no publications experience?

*Are there significant first-year college English course grade differences between those who had high school newspaper or yearbook

staff experiences and those who had no publications experience?

*Are there significant American College Testing Program composite score differences between those who had high school newspaper or yearbook staff experiences and those who had no publications experience?

*Are there significant ACT Assessment individual score differences between those who had high school newspaper or yearbook staff experiences and those who had no publications experience?

*Are there significant high school grade differences between those who had high school newspaper or yearbook staff experiences and those who had no publications experience?

A search of the literature did not produce any studies in which the questions above were addressed by one of the nationally recognized testing agencies such as ACT or the Educational Testing Service (which has produced the Scholastic Aptitude Test).

However, in related research Blinn has shown comparisons of advanced placement and senior honors composition classes with journalism students of similar ability. In the 1982 study of students in 12 Ohio high schools, his data analysis showed that "journalism writers made fewer errors in most of the writing skill criteria than do non-journalism students." Writing skill criteria included measures of information presentation and selection judgment, errors in fact, information omission, opening sentence, and editorializing. And in each of the areas there was a statistically significant difference between journalism and non-journalism students.[6]

A 1981 study by Koziol demonstrated the purposive nature of publications experience in high school. He found that 70 percent of the high school students responding to a survey indicated they wanted to

continue in some communication-related profession because they could then use their writing, speaking and creative abilities that were discovered and nurtured in a journalism experience.[7]

Much anecdotal evidence is available that espouses the worth of publications experience in the high school. Former and current journalism students[8] and journalism educators[9] have written fairly extensive accounts of high school publications' value.

Further, a recent study of 72 college upperclassmen revealed that of all co-curricular activities offered at their high schools, newspaper and yearbook staff experience ranked first out of seven when they were asked to rate activities according to their value in preparing them for the rigors of college. Speech/drama/debate and student senate/class officer tied for second; they were followed by academic-related clubs, athletics, music-related activities and non-academic clubs.[10]

Method

ACT personnel selected 10 colleges and universities that participated in its Standard Research Service during 1983-1984,[11] and from this group 19,249 currently enrolled students were randomly selected for whom the following data were known: ACT Assessment Program scores; Interest Inventory and Student Profile Section scores; final grades in the last high school courses in English, social studies, mathematics and science; college freshman cumulative grade point averages; and first college English course grades.[12]

The independent variable for analysis was Item #143 from the ACT Student Profile Section that was completed when the student took the ACT Assessment as a high school junior or senior. The item was listed

in the "Out of Class Accomplishments" section, and students had to respond "yes, applies to me" or "no, does not apply to me" to the following item: "Worked on the staff of a school paper or yearbook." Those in the total pool of positive responses numbered 4,798--24.93 percent.

The four tests of the standardized ACT Assessment include English,[13] Mathematics,[14] Social Studies,[15] and Natural Science.[16] The composite score of the four individual assessments is often used by colleges and universities for both admission and placement purposes.[17]

After extensive testing for reliability over a several-year period, ACT concluded that internal characteristics of the tests show a precision of measurement in the range of .80 to .85 for the four subtests and near .90 for the Composite score.[18] Similar studies of the validity of ACT's four student-reported high school grades, the four Assessment tests, and the grades and test scores combined with first semester college grade point average reveal that ACT scores and student-reported high school grades are "good predictors of overall college GPA with median multiple correlations of .465 and .512 respectively."[19]

Within the Student Profile Section of the Assessment of high school students, the two predictors used in combination with it increased the median correlation to .576.[20]

Comparisons between the group with high school newspaper or yearbook staff experience were compared with the group that had no publications experience by using t-tests.

Results

College students who had been on the staff of a high school news-

paper or yearbook, as seen in Table 1, had significantly higher freshman grade point averages (2.673 on a 4.0 scale) than those who had not been on a publications staff (2.618) ($t=4.55$; $p<.001$). In this part of the analyses, 4,634 persons had publications experience while 13,869 did not.

TABLE 1

Comparison of College Grade Point Averages Between Those Who Did and Those Who Did Not Work on the Staff of a High School Yearbook or Newspaper

College Grades	Publications	Non-Publications	t
Freshman Cumulative Grade Point Average	$\bar{X}$=2.673 n=4,634 s.d.=0.71	$\bar{X}$=2.618 n=13,869 s.d.=0.72	4.55*
First Freshman English Grade	$\bar{X}$=2.823 n=2,969 s.d.=0.77	$\bar{X}$=2.711 n=9,359 s.d.=0.77	6.92*

*Difference significant beyond the .001 level

Similarly, in their first college English courses--often courses in composition or rhetoric--students who had been on the staff of a high school publication averaged a grade of 2.823 (n=2,969) compared with a grade of 2.711 (n=9,359) for those with no high school newspaper or yearbook experience ($t=6.92$; $p<.001$).

When evaluating comparisons using the ACT Assessment (Table 2), those students with high school newspaper or yearbook experience had significantly higher scores on the ACT Composite, the ACT English, and the ACT Social Studies components. They had significantly lower scores

on the ACT Mathematics Assessment, and there was no significant difference on the Natural Science Assessment.

TABLE 2
Comparisons of ACT Scores Between Those Who Did and Those Who Did Not Work on the Staff of a High School Newspaper or Yearbook

ACT Assessment	Publications	Non-Publications	t
Composite	$\bar{X}$=23.12 n=4,798 s.d.=4.90	$\bar{X}$=22.88 n=14,451 s.d.=4.96	2.95**
English	$\bar{X}$=22.16 n=4,798 s.d.=4.40	$\bar{X}$=21.19 n=14,451 s.d.=4.56	13.08*
Social Studies	$\bar{X}$=22.63 n=4,798 s.d.=6.26	$\bar{X}$=22.00 n=14,451 s.d.=6.42	5.96*
Mathematics	$\bar{X}$=22.36 n=4,798 s.d.=7.11	$\bar{X}$=23.02 n=14,451 s.d.=6.93	-5.73*
Natural Science	$\bar{X}$=24.84 n=4,798 s.d.=5.47	$\bar{X}$=24.81 n=14,451 s.d.=5.56	0.259

*Difference significant beyond the .001 level

**Difference significant beyond the .004 level

On the ACT Composite score, those students with high school newspaper or yearbook experience (n=4,798) had means of 23.12 (76th percentile) compared with means of 22.88 (74th percentile) for those with no publications experience (n=14,451) ($t=2.95$; $p<.004$).[21]

In the four subtests of the ACT Assessment (Table 2), students with newspaper or yearbook experience had significantly higher English mean scores (22.16--81st percentile; n=4,798) than those students with no high school publications experience (21.19--69th percentile;

n=14,451) (t=13.08; p<.001). Also significantly higher were ACT Social Studies mean scores of students with publications experience (22.63--74th percentile; n=4,798) compared with those students with no high school newspaper or yearbook experience (22.00--70th percentile; n=14,451) (t=5.96; p<.001).

Students with high school publications experience had significantly lower ACT Mathematics Assessment mean scores (22.36--69th percentile; n=4,798) than those who did not have newspaper or yearbook experience (23.02--74th percentile; n=14,451) (t=-5.73; p<.001).

No statistically significant difference was found in the comparison between the two groups and ACT Natural Science Assessment scores. Those with high school newspaper or yearbook experience had Science mean scores of 24.84 (71st percentile; n=4,798) compared with the non-publication group mean score of 24.81 (71st percentile; n=14,451) (t=0.26).

As shown in Table 3, those students with high school newspaper or yearbook experience earned significantly higher grades in their final high school courses in English, social studies, mathematics and science than did their counterparts with no publications background. Also, students with publications experience earned a significantly higher average when those final four courses were combined than did those without such experience.

The four-course high school average for those with publications experience was 3.32 on a 4.0 scale (n=4,798) compared with a mean of 3.20 (n=14,451) for those without newspaper or yearbook experience (t=11.77; p<.001). High school English final-course mean grade was 3.45 (n=4,758) for the group with publications background while for those

without such background the mean was 3.26 in English (n=14,316) (t=16.65; p<.001).

TABLE 3

Comparisons of High School Final-Course Grades Between Those Who Did and Those Who Did Not Work on the Staff of a Newspaper or Yearbook

Final High School Course Grade	Publication	Non-Publication	t
Cumulative	$\bar{X}$=3.32 n=4.798 s.d.=0.58	$\bar{X}$=3.20 n=14,451 s.d.=0.61	11.77*
English	$\bar{X}$=3.45 n=4,758 s.d.=0.67	$\bar{X}$=3.26 n=14,316 s.d.=0.73	16.65*
Social Studies	$\bar{X}$=3.50 n=4,657 s.d.=0.68	$\bar{X}$=3.37 n=14,008 s.d.=0.73	11.40*
Mathematics	$\bar{X}$=3.10 n=4,648 s.d.=0.87	$\bar{X}$=3.04 n=14,079 s.d.=0.88	3.44*
Natural Science	$\bar{X}$=3.30 n=4,497 s.d.=0.77	$\bar{X}$=3.22 n=13,345 s.d.=0.78	5.62*

*Difference significant beyond the .001 level

Final-course high school grades in social studies for the group with newspaper or yearbook experience averaged 3.50 (n=4,657) while those in the non-publication group had a significantly lower mean score of 3.37 (n=14,008) (t=11.40; p<.001).

In mathematics, the final high school mean grade of those in the group with newspaper or yearbook experience was 3.10 (n=4,648) compared with a significantly lower mean score of the non-publication group, which had a 3.04 (n=14,079) (t=3.44; p<.001).

The final high school natural science mean grade for the group with newspaper or yearbook experience was significantly higher, 3.30, (n=4,497) than the group with no publications experience, 3.22 (n=13,345) ($t=5.62$; $p<.001$).

Summary and Discussion

Findings indicate that in 10 of 12 statistical comparisons, those students who had completed at least one year of college and who had been on the staff of a high school newspaper or yearbook earned significantly higher scores than their non-publications counterparts. Those 10 significantly higher comparisons are found in cumulative freshman college grade point average; first collegiate English course; ACT Composite score; ACT English score; ACT Social Studies score; mean score of final four high school courses in English, social studies, mathematics and natural science; final high school English grade; final high school social studies grade; final high school mathematics grade; and final high school natural science grade.

In only one of 12 comparisons--the ACT Mathematics score--did the group with high school publications experience show a negative significant difference. In the ACT Science Assessment, no significant differences were observed.

An apparent anomaly is observed when comparing the four subject-area ACT Assessments and the final four equivalent high school course grades. While both groups of the 19,249 students in this study averaged no less than the 69th percentile on the nationally standardized tests, students with newspaper or yearbook staff experience achieved significantly higher ACT scores in English and Social Studies Assessments; they were significantly lower in the ACT

Mathematics Assessment; they scored the same as their non-publications counterparts on the Natural Science Assessment. Yet, when comparing differences among final high school courses in each of those four subject areas, the students with publications experience performed at significantly higher grade point levels than those students with no high school newspaper or yearbook experience.

Another area for future study is the actual effect of high school publications experience--and the effect of having taken a formal journalism course--on writing and critical thinking abilities of students in both high school and college. Similarly, the data base used in the study had only one item that pertained to school publications, and it included both newspaper and yearbook. Further analyses ought to be done while examining each of those experiences as isolated factors.

One further observation concerning the findings in the study: While conclusions related to causality have been avoided, one can say from data presented that high school newspapers and yearbooks have been staffed by students who performed better in 10 of the 12 variables examined. Thus, newspaper or yearbook activities provide a type of outlet for these talented students that might not otherwise be provided within a school's curricular or co-curricular offerings.

Some Demographic Observations

Some additional understanding of the differences between publications and non-publications students may be garnered by an examination of various demographic data that ACT provides through its Student Profile Section of the ACT Assessment.

As seen in Table 4, almost 10 percent more of the publications students tend to come from communities with populations of 10,000 or

less. Almost 16 percent more of the publications students came from high school graduating classes with fewer than 200 students (38.19 percent compared with only 22.42 percent of the non-publications students).

On the one hand, this might indicate the reason publications students seem to do better in overall in ACT tests, college grades and high school grades: They have more opportunities to be involved in things like publications because of the size of the school. However, in smaller schools there is also a tendency to have fewer economic resources, less equipment, a less top-notch faculty, fewer academic and co-curricular offerings and more limited academic support facilities.

Also of interest in Table 4 is the percentage of minority students involved with publications compared with the number of minorities not involved. Most media observers in 1986 are keenly aware of media attempts to attract qualified minorities to their ranks. Groups like the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the American Newspaper Publishers Association and the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, among others, have embarked upon programs to encourage talented minority students toward media careers.

These data indicate that, at least on the high school level, a higher percentage of minority students participate in publications (10 percent) than do those in the non-publications group (9.81 percent). Once again, readers should be cautioned that the sample involved here represents those high school students who took ACT tests in high school and then went on to college and completed at least the freshman year.

Publications students also took more English in high school (88.52 percent took four or more years equivalent) than did those who did not

work on publications (85.21 percent of the non-publications students took four or more years of English).

TABLE 4

ACT Student Profile Section Items: High School Information

Item		Percentage	Total n in Subgroup
Size of community in which you live: Under 10,000 population			
	Publ.	33.46	4,474
	Non-publ.	23.67	13,156
From a high school with fewer than 200 students in the graduating class			
	Publ.	38.19	4,520
	Non-publ.	22.42	13,115
Racial Ethnic Minority Group: Afro-American/Black; American Indian, Alaskan Native; Mexican-American/ Chicano; Asian-American, Pacific Islander; Puerto Rican, Cuban, other Hispanic origin; other			
	Publ.	10.00	4,522
	Non-publ.	9.81	13,156
Number of years studied English in high school			
	Publ.	88.52	4,540
	Non-publ.	85.21	13,183

Of further interest in the profile items is the evaluation of high school experiences by students who took the ACT and who have completed the first year of college.

As Table 5 shows, more than half (56.03 percent) of the publications students said they were satisfied with the number and variety of course offerings; however, non-publications students showed

a much higher level of satisfaction with the number and variety of course offerings (67.24 percent positive responses to the item). This could be a reflection on the smaller size of school and community from which a higher percentage of publications students come.

On the other end of the continuum of the same item, a much higher percentage of publications students (30.92 percent) registered dissatisfaction with the number and variety of course offerings compared with only 19.10 percent of the non-publications students who registered dissatisfaction.

Similarly in Table 5, publications students were more likely to be dissatisfied with laboratory facilities than were non-publications students. Indeed, 22.17 percent of the publications students indicated they were dissatisfied with high school laboratory facilities while only 16.97 percent of the non-publications students indicated dissatisfaction.

And on a final continuum in Table 5, students were asked about provisions being made for academically outstanding students--for example, honor programs, accelerated courses, and the like.

While both groups registered fairly strong satisfaction, only 54.71 percent of the publications students were satisfied with provisions being made for academically outstanding students while 61.18 percent of the non-publications students were satisfied.

And on the same item, but at the opposite end of the continuum, 25.42 percent of the publications students indicated they were dissatisfied with provisions in their schools for academically outstanding students while only 13.96 percent of the non-publications students indicated dissatisfaction on the item.

TABLE 5

ACT Student Profile Section Items:
Evaluation of High School Experiences

Item		Percent	Total n of Subgroup
In high school, I was satisfied with the number and variety of course offerings			
	Publ.	56.02	4,528
	Non-Publ.	67.24	13,161
In high school, I was dissatisfied with the number and variety of course offerings			
	Publ.	30.92	4,528
	Non-Publ.	19.10	13,161
In high school, I was dissatisfied with laboratory facilities			
	Publ.	22.17	4,519
	Non-Publ.	16.97	13,156
In high school, provision was made for academically outstanding students (e.g., honor programs, accelerated courses, etc.)...satisfied			
	Publ.	54.71	4,524
	Non-Publ.	61.18	13,157
In high school, I was dissatisfied with the provision made for academically outstanding students (e.g., honor programs, accelerated courses, etc.)			
	Publ.	25.42	4,524
	Non-Publ.	13.96	13,157

Thus, it appears from Table 5 that a greater sense of dissatisfaction or discontent can be seen among the publications students. Whether this can be attributed to the inquisitive disposition or journalistic training of a journalist is not answerable here; and based on other demographics presented, it could also be attributed to

environmental or situational factors.

Another tendency emerges among publications students when compared with non-publications students: more high school involvement, as seen in Table 6.

TABLE 6

ACT Student Profile Section Items: High School Involvement

Item		Percentage	Total n of Subgroup
While in high school, I was enrolled in advanced placement, accelerated, or honors courses in English			
	Publ.	53.86	4,523
	Non-publ.	44.36	13,176
While in high school, I was involved with student government			
	Publ.	46.63	4,539
	Non-publ.	26.14	13,196
While in high school, I was involved with departmental clubs (science club, math club, etc.)			
	Publ.	49.93	4,532
	Non-Publ.	37.89	13,184
While in high school, I was involved with special-interest groups (ski club, sailing club, drill teams, etc.)			
	Publ.	52.18	4,538
	Non-publ.	43.93	13,185
While in high school, I was involved with school or community service organizations			
	Publ.	55.68	4,528
	Non-publ.	38.95	13,174

As might have been expected, a higher percentage of publications students took advanced placement, accelerated or honors English courses. While 53.86 percent of the publications students were in such

language arts courses in high school, only 44.36 of the non-publications students took advanced English--almost 10 percent more publications students than non-publications students took them.

And in other areas of involvement, publications students show similar higher showings than their counterparts. Almost 47 percent of the publications students had served in student government, but only a little more than 26 percent of the non-publications students had been participants in student government.

With regard to departmental clubs related to academics (such as Spanish club, math club, science club, and the like), publications students outdistanced the non-publications students by more than 12 percentage points. Almost 50 percent of the publications students had been involved in these groups compared with almost 38 percent of the non-publications students.

Co-curricular activities, not necessarily connected to academics, also had higher participation by publications students. In groups like ski club, sailing club, judo club, card section, drill teams, and the like, 52.18 percent of the publications students had participated while in high school compared with 43.93 percent of the non-publications students.

Finally in Table 6, it is observed that 55.68 percent of the publications students had been involved in school or community service organizations. Only 38.95 percent of the non-publications students had been involved with school or community service organizations while in high school.

Once again, an overall observation might be that the students who are most apt to be involved with various high school activities are

also the ones most likely to serve on the staffs of a high school publication. At this most basic level, it is safe to conclude that publications provide an academically related, service-oriented outlet for these involved students.

ACT also asked high school students about their plans for involvement in college. More than two-thirds of the students who had been on the staff of a high school newspaper or yearbook indicated that they planned to participate in publications in college (67.06 percent compared with only 22.53 percent of those who had not been on the staff of a high school publication).

Thus, it would appear that for most of the 4,535 publications students who answered this item, high school publications experience was regarded as a positive and worthwhile activity or they would not indicate a willingness to become involved in collegiate publications.

Information about current college majors of the students in the study was not available in this phase of the ACT study. It would be an important area of analysis in future studies, and is expected to be included in phases two and three to be completed in spring 1986.[22]

Footnotes

[1]A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. The National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, April 1983), p. 18.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 9.

[4]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[5]See, for example, Educational Excellence for Iowa. Final Report of the Joint Committee on Instructional Development and Academic Articulation in Iowa (Des Moines: Iowa State Board of Regents and the Department of Public Instruction, February 1984); First in the Nation in Education. Final Report of the Iowa Excellence in Education Task Force (Des Moines: Iowa Legislative Council, 1984; and A Nation at Risk.

[6]John R. Blinn, "A Comparison of Selected Writing Skills of High School Journalism and Non-Journalism Students," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 1982, p. 103.

[7]Robert V. Koziol, "Future Trends in Journalism Education," School Press Review (February 1981): 12-13.

[8]See, for example, Homer L. Hall, "Former Journalism Students Speak Out," Communication: Journalism Education Today 17:9-15 (Summer 1984); Lynlea Hall, "Is High School Journalism Worth Keeping?" Communication: Journalism Education Today 17:5-7 (Summer 1984); Wendy Weyen, "Benefits of a Strong Journalism Program," Communication: Journalism Education Today 17:3-4 (Summer 1984).

[9]See, for example, John Bowen, "More Than a Basic," School Press Review (Winter 1984): 20; Dennis Alan Cripe, "We Are What We Write," School Press Review (Winter 1984): 21; Ruth Dowling, Nancy Green and Louis E. Ingelhart, Guidelines for Journalism Instructional Programs and Effective Student Publications (Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1977); Clarence W. Hach, "How Journalism Instruction Meets the 10 Imperative Needs," NASSP Bulletin 59:26 (February 1975); Homer L. Hall, "Will Scholastic Journalism Survive?" Communication: Journalism Education Today 17:2 (Summer 1984); Robert P. Knight, "Scholastic Journalism is of Age," (Paper presented to the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism Annual Convention, East Lansing, Michigan, August 1981); Lynn Shenkman, "Excellence in Journalism," Florida Scholastic Press Association Newsletter (Summer 1984); Rod Vahl, "Five-Star Priority," School Press Review (Winter 1984):22.

[10]Jack Dvorak, "When It Comes to Co-Curriculars, Publications Experience Seen as No.1 College Prep," Iowa High School Press Association Newsletter 19:2-3 (February 1986).

[11]The 10 colleges and universities from which students were randomly selected for the study were Auburn, Arizona State, Arkansas, Denver, Northern Illinois, Illinois, Kansas, Calvin College, Oklahoma, and Brigham Young.

[12]According to information provided in a brochure published by ACT in 1985, about 1 million high school juniors and seniors complete the ACT Assessment each year. The results are used by more than 2,700 colleges and universities, scholarship agencies, and state educational systems. Many of these institutions participate each year in ACT's research services, through which local normative data, predictive information, and college freshman class profiles are generated. It is the prevalent standardized test of this nature within 28 states.

[13]The ACT English Usage Test is a 75-item, 40-minute test that measures students' understanding and use of the basic elements in correct and effective writing: usage, phraseology, style, and organization. It gives considerably greater weight to clear and effective expression and analysis of forms of expression than to rote recall of rules of grammar. This and more complete information are available in Highlights of the ACT Technical Report (Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program, 1973), p. 5.

[14]The ACT Mathematics Usage Test is a 40-item, 50-minute examination that measures a student's mathematical reasoning ability, and the solution of quantitative reasoning problems encountered in many college curricula is stressed. This and more complete information are available in Highlights of the ACT Technical Report, p. 5.

[15]The ACT Social Studies Reading Test is a 52-item, 35-minute test that measures evaluative reasoning, reading, and problem-solving skills required in social studies. There are two types of items: the first is based on reading passages, the second on general background information obtained primarily in high school social studies courses. This and more complete information are available in Highlights of the ACT Technical Report, pp. 5-8.

[16]The ACT Natural Sciences Reading Test is a 52-item, 35-minute test that measures the critical reasoning and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences. There are two types of items: the first based on reading passages, the second on information about science. This and more complete information are available in Highlights of the ACT Technical Report, pp. 8-10.

[17]Ibid., pp. 2-4.

[18]Ibid., p. 14.

[19]Ibid., p. 18

[20]Ibid.

[21]Percentile scores of both groups in the study were consistently more than the 50th percentile of national norms because the analysis was limited to only those students who had taken the ACT Assessment in high school, who had completed the freshman year of college and whose first English course grades and first-year cumulative grade point averages were known, and who attended colleges and universities that participated in ACT's Standard Research Service.

[22]This study is being funded by the Gannett Foundation, the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund and the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation as part of a study by the Journalism Education Association's Commission on the Role of Journalism in the Secondary School. The author wishes to thank James Maxey, director and senior research scientist of ACT's Research Division, for his valuable assistance.